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Joy in Heaven over the Penitent.

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A

SERMON,

DELIVERED IN PARK STREET CHURCH,

BEFORE THE

PENITENT FEMALES' REFUGE SOCIETY,

ON THE EVENING OF

SABBATH, DECEMBER 18, 1825.

By JUSTIN EDWARDS,
Pastor of the South Church in Andover.

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SERMON.

LUKE, xv. 10.

THERE IS JOY IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ANGELS OF GOD OVER ONE SINNER THAT REPENTETH.

No person can hear this declaration of Jesus Christ, and heartily believe it, without feeling that the repentance of a sinner is an event of great importance. Angels do not rejoice without good reason; nor without seeing the subject of their joy connected with momentous results, to the kingdom of Jehovah. The fact that they rejoice over one that repenteth, and that this is revealed, by the Son of God, to our world, is perfect demonstration that it is an event of amazing importance.

Even men, if wise, and acquainted with the subject, do not rejoice without good reason. Should an event occasion joy to the inhabitants only of this city; should you go through every street, and lane, and avenue, enter every house, and find every family rejoicing with exceeding great joy, you could not avoid the conviction, that something had transpired, of great importance.

They publish it. And joy spreads from city to city; from country to country; till every kingdom, and town, and family, and soul on the globe partake in it; there is joy wherever there is a heart to feel, or a tongue to utter it, and the whole earth breaks forth in one universal acclamation; and you cannot but feel that something has transpired of amazing importance. It seems to you that

its importance transcends human conception. And as you stand and wonder, another event takes place. No visible messenger publishes it; but heralds unseen carry the tidings upward, and a flame kindles on the heavenly plains; it spreads through the spirits of just men made perfect, through the ranks of angels, of cherubim, and seraphim, till multitudes that no man can number, in celestial strains, and with immortal tongues, pour forth their alleluias, and drown the expression of every earthly joy; and you cannot but feel, with unutterable intensity, that the cause of their joy is inconceivably momentous. It must be graven indelibly, and must tell on the annals of the universe forever. And what is the cause of their joy? The repentance of a sinner. Yes, let it be told, for the Son of God has published it, let it reach every ear in creation, and touch every heart in the universe. There is joy in the presence of all the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. And this too, not merely when that sinner is rich, and learned, and moral, and respectable, and useful among men; but when he is poor, and ignorant, and immoral, and debased; whose look is pollution, and whose influence is death. Let even such a sinner repent, and angels rejoice even over him.

Why then did they not rejoice over Judas? He repented, and went away, and hanged himself; and went to his own place. Angels had no joy over him. And it would have been better for Judas if he never had been born. Ah, his repentance was not of the right kind. It had in it no holiness; no hatred of sin; no love to God. It was only conscious guilt, and fear of punishment. Sorrow he had; but it was that of the world, which worketh death. Other sinners, in other generations, have repented like Judas; and like him, have gone to their own place. Angels had no joy over them; and it would have been better for them if they never had been born.

The repentance which angels love, is a turning from all known sin; with the sorrow of one who loves God, in view of his own rebellion against him. This person forsakes his sins, because they are offensive to God, and

ruinous to men. He engages heartily in the discharge of all known duty, for the purpose of glorifying God, and doing good. Let a sinner exercise this repentance; and angels will rejoice with exceeding great joy: though he be the most obscure individual that ever lived; or, if you will, the most debased, and the most abominable.

Let one, even of those miserable females, who is now utterly abandoned; and shut out from all human society, except that of such as have the spirit of devils, who carries the mark of the beast on her forehead, and is hastening to that everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels, let her, in this her day, repent of her sins, and there is joy in the presence of all the angels of God, even over her.

It is to this class of sinners, that on this anniversary of a society, formed for the purpose of leading them to repentance, that I shall apply the truth in the text.

In view of this truth, made known by the God of heaven, to our world, an important question arises, viz. Why is there joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one such sinner that repenteth.

In a plain, scriptural manner, to answer this question, will be my present object. In doing this, I observe, That angels rejoice over her, because her repentance shows that she is born of God; that she will be delivered from the second death; that God will be her eternal portion; and that her influence on the kingdom of Jehovah, will be forever changed.

I. Her repentance shows that she is born of God.

A change, called in the Bible, being born of God, he has declared to be essential to the kingdom of heaven. Before, this sinner had never experienced it. She was born, only of the flesh. Her very mind was carnal, and enmity against God. She was an alien from the Commonwealth of Israel, a stranger to the covenant of promise, without hope, and without God in the world. Though Jesus had entered the holy place with his blood, and obtained eternal redemption; though he had tasted death for every man, made a propitiation for the sins of

the whole world, and whosoever would, might come unto him and have life, she would not come. She hated light, and loved darkness; because her deeds were evil. And she was preparing to plunge into blackness of darkness forever. Angels knew, that, notwithstanding all that Christ had done to open the gate of heaven, or ever would do, she must be born again, or she could never enter there. Into that place entereth nothing that defileth. She was defiled; and, without a renovation by the Spirit of God, must depart accursed into that fire, from which the smoke of her torment would ascend up forever and ever. Angels knew this. And they knew that she must experience a change in this life; for in the grave there is no work, and after death, no redemption. She that is holy, must be holy still; and she that is filthy be filthy still. They were therefore as anxious to see her born of God, as to have her an inhabitant of heaven; and to see her born of God soon; for such, they knew, do not live out half their days. And when the voice of infinite kindness said, Go ye out into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring hither the poor, and the halt, and the maimed, and the blind; compel them to come in, that my house may be filled; for all things are ready; when the Spirit and the bride said, Come; and he that heard said, come; not an angel dissented; but, Come, echoed through the courts of heaven. And when, through marvellous grace, this sinner did come, weary, and heavy laden, loathing her transgressions, and casting herself, guilty, and ruined, at the feet of her Lord; with that godly sorrow, which worketh repentance unto salvation, they knew that she was born of God, and had passed from death unto life. A burst of glory broke through heaven as they sung, She was dead, and is alive again, she was lost, and is found. Nor are they mistaken. She is now meek, and lowly, she is humble, and contrite in heart. She walks softly before God, and trembles at his word. And the Most High, though the heavens, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, comes down, and dwells with the lowly, and takes up his abode with

the contrite in heart. She forsakes every evil, and false way, cleaves with full purpose of heart unto the Lord, and delights in keeping his commandments. She has experienced a resurrection with Christ, and she manifests it by seeking those things that are above; where Christ is, and living, not unto herself, but unto him that died for her, and rose again. She begins already to shine in the glory of his image, and angels are not ashamed to own her. Though she was a child of the devil, she has become through boundless grace, a daughter of the Lord Almighty.

II. She will be delivered from the second death.

What the second death is, none but God fully knows. About it we know nothing, except what we see, and feel of the effects of sin; and what God has told us. Finite minds, in the course of finite duration, can know about it, comparatively but little. Yet we know enough if we believe God, to make us feel, and that deeply, that it is something overwhelmingly dreadful. It is, he tells us, Everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord; going away into devouring fire; into everlasting burnings, where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth; where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And who can dwell with devouring fire; who can inherit everlasting burnings! The bare prospect of it, has made the hardened sinner, in this life, curse his existence; and cry out in agony, 'Oh the insufferable pangs of hell, and damnation. Could I, by lying a thousand years in that flame escape! But ah, millions of millions of years will bring me no nearer the end of my torment, than one poor hour. Oh eternity! eternity! who can fathom the abyss of eternity, or paraphrase the words forever and ever.' To this amazing suffering that poor sinner, before she repented, was every moment exposed. Her ways were ways of death, her steps took hold on hell. She walked wherever she went, over the bottomless pit; and nothing but the brittle thread of life, which angels knew, might be sundered in a moment, kept her from endless perdition. She hung as on a

single thread, while the flames were flashing all around her. But glory to God in the highest, she is snatched as a brand from the burning; and saved, through grace, by repentance and faith, from the second death. All the misery that she would have endured, amounting in the course of endless being, to more than all that has ever yet been endured by all creatures from the creation, is struck out of existence; or rather is prevented from ever coming in. No wonder there is joy in the presence of the angels. God himself rejoices. All holy beings rejoice, and will rejoice forever; for she is saved from the second death.

III. Jehovah will be her eternal portion.

Such is the nature of the human soul that to be happy, it must have a portion: something without itself to which it can look, and on which it can safely depend for enjoyment.

This portion must be adapted to the nature of the soul, be able to satisfy its desires, and be lasting as its existence. Of course it must be spiritual, boundless, and eternal. It cannot therefore be found in creatures. Brutes may have a kind of happiness suited to their nature, from the gifts of God. But souls must have for their portion, the Giver. Gifts simply, only increase their desires. They never satisfy them. As well may you satisfy fire by increasing fuel, as to satisfy souls by increasing gifts, without the enjoyment of the Giver. Give what he can, without him they are poor. And their poverty will increase, till it be absolute, and eternal. This God knows. And to the penitent soul, he saith, I am thy God. If father, or mother forsake thee, the Lord will take thee up. Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he will sustain thee. All things shall work together for thy good; and thou shalt not want any good thing. He will guide thee by his counsel, and afterward receive thee to glory. He will be thy shield, and thine exceeding great reward. What it is, to have God for a portion, especially an *eternal* portion, none but God fully knows. It is a glory which eye hath not seen, which ear hath

not heard, and of which no finite mind can fully conceive.

Worldly men who seek their happiness in creatures, and have their good things in this life, know nothing of it. They have no conception of the blessedness of enjoying God, and having him for an eternal portion. They therefore see no cause of joy, and do not manifest it, when he becomes the portion of others. Should the sinner who repents receive a kingdom, or an empire, with all their riches and glory, and have the assurance of possessing them through life, they would think her portion immense. But should she receive every kingdom and empire on the globe, with all their riches and glory, and with the certainty of possessing them to the last moment of life, her portion would be as much less than it is now, as the thing made is less than God, who made it. Her portion is Jehovah. Before him kingdoms, and empires are nothing. He taketh the ocean in the hollow of his hand; meteth out the heavens with a span; comprehendeth the dust of the earth in a measure; weigheth the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance. All nations before him, are as a drop of the bucket, and their glory as the dust of the balance. He taketh them up as a very little thing, and counteth them less than nothing, and vanity.

I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the heavens, and the earth fled away. He is the penitent sinner's portion; her everlasting portion. Though the heavens be wrapped together, and pass away with a great noise, the elements melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and all that is in it be burnt up, Jehovah lives; her portion is secure. Neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall separate her from the love of God. She shall dwell in his presence, shine in the beauty of his image, and reflect the lustre of his glory, with greater, and greater brightness, through the universe, forever. O the mighty contrast with what she would

have been, had she not repented. Cast into hell, a brand in devouring fire, to show by the intensity, and eternity of her anguish the greatness of the guilt of rebelling against God. Now she is a trophy of grace, to shine as the sun in his strength, and to grow brighter, and brighter, in beauty and holiness, to everlasting ages.

IV. Her influence on the kingdom of Jehovah will be forever changed.

No moral being can exist, and act under the government of God, without exerting a moral influence. This influence will be of the same kind with the character, and will have an effect in forming, and fixing the character of other moral beings. And it seems to be a characteristic of moral influence, after it is begun, to continue, and, in its consequences, to grow greater, and greater. Hence an amazing responsibility attaches to the holding of a moral existence. A person must exert an influence, let his, or her character, and condition, be what it may; and an influence that will be felt, after earth is dissolved; and will tell on the eternal destinies of men.

Even a single female, born in obscurity, brought up in retirement, and spending her days in private life, exerts an influence that may operate on thousands, ages after she is dead. The effects of this influence will occupy the distinct attention of God, angels, and men, at the day of judgment; and be told, by ten thousand thousand, in strains of higher, and higher glory, or in tones of deeper, and deeper anguish. Then shall the universe begin to see what God means, when he says, One sinner destroyeth much good. This is the case even with a single female, especially if she is abandoned, and continues impenitent to the end of life. She is destitute of moral principle, and for the gratifications of sin would sacrifice the glory of God, and all the happiness of his kingdom. The good which she actually destroys by her wickedness, none but God can fully understand. This would be true, did she destroy simply her own soul. But she destroys multitudes of others. None, saith God, that go unto her, return again; neither take they hold of the paths of life.

Her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death. This is the account which God gives, who is witness to all her conduct, and knows its influence in destroying souls. It is an influence in the heart of a populous city, to which multitudes of thoughtless youth are constantly exposed; an influence deeper, more malignant, and more powerful in preparing souls for hell, than any but God fully knows. Angels however know something of it, as they see one after another, in rapid succession, cut off, in the midst of their days, and hurried away, by infernal spirits, to the world of woe.

We know, or ought to know, too much about it, to be even thought of without the deepest horror. Too long have Christians shut their eyes against this *blackness* of *darkness*. In some cases they have done this from fear of being contaminated by the sight. But let us remember, that shutting our eyes against the evil, does not remove it. Letting it alone, does not lessen it; but leaves it, where Satan would have it; to increase unseen, until it becomes a mighty vortex, spreading wider, and wider, drawing in, every year, greater, and still greater numbers, and sinking them to the world of woe.

A vast portion of this evil is done by abandoned females. Many a mother's heart has been wrung with anguish, and a father's eyes been suffused with tears, over a daughter, corrupted and ruined by wicked females. Out of more than one hundred, two of whom were only thirteen years old, and four of whom were only fourteen; and the average age of the whole of whom, did not exceed nineteen years, who were rescued from haunts of abandonment in a single year, by the labours of such a Society as this, more than half of them were seduced from paths of virtue, and led to abodes of infamy, by abandoned females. Very few, if any of those probably, had it not been for that Society, would have escaped perdition. Nor would their destruction have been the only evil; but they would have been the means of corrupting and destroying others; and they of destroying others;

and the evil extended and extended. And were the consequences to stop within the limits of time, it would be comparatively small. But they extend into eternity; and onward, as the poor lost souls gnaw their tongues for pain, and curse their God, and King, and look upward. Nor were these one hundred all. No, these were only what were rescued, by a single Society, in a single year. Multitudes more never escaped. And how many were led to ruin by them, and how many more will be by those that follow them; as the evil goes on, increasing from generation to generation, and is felt with deeper, and deeper anguish, to all eternity, none but God can tell.

But when one of these sinners repents, her influence on the world is changed. No longer will she be the means of leading other sinners to destruction, but will now be the means of preparing them for glory. Deeply has she felt the bitterness of sin, and most heartily does she loathe it. Something has she seen of the beauty of holiness; and something has she felt of her obligations to the riches of distinguishing grace. Said one of these penitents, whose life testified that she had tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious, 'Why was I brought to hear the sound of the gospel, and as I trust, to receive it, while thousands are left to perish. 'Twas even so father, for so it hath seemed good in thy sight. I want words to express my gratitude to God, and to those kind friends, through whose interposition, I have been rescued. But I trust that a life devoted to his will, as it is the surest, so it will be the constant evidence, that I have passed from death to life.'

Said another of these penitents, 'My father and my mother did not forsake me, but I forsook them. Yet the Lord hath taken me up. I was lost, but am found. When wandering far from home, and from happiness, my Shepherd saw me, and brought me back. O what a mercy.' Such a sinner loveth much.

Said another of these penitents to her mother, (who had been awakened from the slumbers of moral death, through her instrumentality, and who had written to her,

to know what she should do to be saved,) 'I have shed many tears over your letter—the first of the kind I ever received from you, but I hope it will not be the *last*. Do not despair, my dear mother, the salvation that Jesus Christ died to procure for poor sinners, does not exclude you. If you come with a believing, sincere, and penitent heart, pardon only waits for your acceptance. Jesus has promised that he will cast out none that come to him.—I am glad my dear mother that you feel the value of the blessed Bible. It is from that alone we can learn the love of Jesus Christ, to poor perishing sinners. It opens a refuge where the vilest, sensible of their lost estate, and willing to forsake sin, may enter.'

Another female penitent has been known to write to her younger sister, who had never strayed from the path of virtue, and warn her in the most tender, earnest, and solemn manner, to make the Lord her refuge, and underneath his wings to put her everlasting trust.

Nor is the influence of a female who has repented, confined to those with whom she is connected, to whom she may have personal access, and through them to those that come after them. But she may exert an influence kind, and all-pervading as the dew of heaven, upon multitudes of others. No sooner has she repented, than she becomes a person of *prayer*. She has an interest at the throne of grace, and an effectual intercession there. Ask, saith God, and it shall be given you, seek, and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Would any of you, being a father, should a famishing child ask bread, give him a stone, or should he ask a fish, would you give him a serpent? If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit, to them that ask him. And it is especially for the Holy Spirit, that such a sinner prays. She has experienced of the exceeding greatness of his power, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead. And it is her heart's desire, and prayer to God daily,

that others may receive the same infinite blessing. For this her intercessions ascend without ceasing, and are presented by him who stands at the golden altar, to offer with much incense the prayers of the saints. And how many blessings will, in answer, descend upon the world, no mortal can determine. But this we know, her prayers of faith, will be answered. And they will be answered abundantly, not only while she lives, but after she is dead, and onward through all future ages, so long as there is a single petition, which, on earth, she offered in faith unto God, that has not been followed with its appropriate blessing. Open your mouths wide, saith God, and I will fill them. And he will manifest his faithfulness. No sooner, in answer to the prayers of one sinner who has repented, is another sinner born of God, than that sinner begins to be the means of saving other sinners, and they of saving others. And the influence starting from a single individual, may be carried forward, increasing as it goes, and extending in its consequences to all eternity. Go then with that one individual who is born of God, who will be saved herself from the second death, and to whom Jehovah will be an eternal portion; witness her after twenty years' active service for God, and daily prayer for the salvation of souls, as she lies on the bed of death. Hear her as she says to her heavenly Father, Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, thy rod, and thy staff they shall comfort me; and begins to sing, O death where is thy sting, O grave where is thy victory. I shall behold thy face in righteousness, and shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness. Go with her to the bar of God, and see the heavenly joy depicted on her countenance, as she meets the smile of divine approbation, and enter with her, and all whose salvation has in any way been connected with her, upon celestial joys; and, in the light of eternal ages, witness the consequences, in their various bearings, and results, to the kingdom of Jehovah; and you will not wonder that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over her

that repenteth. She is prepared to be the means of increasing the number of their companions, and adding multitudes, to the multitude that no man can number, who shout unto their God, and ours, harmonious songs of salvation.

And as the groans of never dying anguish break on your ear, and the smoke of ever rising torment meets your eye; and you see what she would have been, and would have done, had she not repented; and hear her now, mingling sweetly with ten thousand thousand in loud alleluias to the Lamb that was slain, your heart will be full. And if you have a spark of their spirit, you will break forth in accents of glory to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever, and ever.

In view of this subject, thus faintly exhibited, the one half of which cannot, by mortal tongues, be told you, I remark,

1. If the repentance of one of these sinners is of such amazing importance, we are all bound to make efforts to promote it. And for this purpose we are bound to cause them to hear the gospel. This is the means which God has appointed to lead sinners to repentance; and which he has commanded us to use. Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Mark, my hearers, two expressions, in this command; *all* the world, and *every* creature. Yonder abode of infamy and abandonment, though on the confines of hell, is a part of this world. Of course it is included in this command. Its inhabitants, though soon, if not rescued, to be tenants of the world of despair, are yet among the creatures of God, to *every one* of whom he commands us to preach the gospel. But says one, They are near, let them come and hear the gospel. But God commands us, to preach the gospel, not simply to those who will come, and hear it. But, Go ye, and carry it to them; whether they are excluded by distance, or by sin. And preach the gospel to every creature. This unquestionably includes this class of sinners. And, to the shame of

Christendom be it spoken, while she has, in obedience to God, been sending the gospel to the ends of the earth, and causing joy in the presence of the angels, over abandoned sinners who have there repented; she has had hundreds of thousands of sinners equally abandoned, congregated in her populous cities, doing vastly more mischief, and ripening for unspeakably more dreadful condemnation, to many of whom, in direct disobedience to God, she has never, even to this day, preached the gospel.

Do you say, It would do no good to preach the gospel to them; they have rejected it, and are sunk too low, to be benefitted by it. So saying, you impeach the wisdom of God. You slight his power. Is not the name, by which he will be called, The Almighty God. Has he, at an infinite expense, provided a remedy for every moral disease; and say you to any class of persons to whom he commands you to apply it, that it will do them no good? Do you offer this, as an excuse for neglecting his commands, who hath said, As rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither but watereth the earth, and causeth it to bring forth, and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so shall my word be, that goeth forth out of my mouth. It shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it? The gospel is a remedy provided by God for sinners; and faithfully applied, will meet their case. Go then in the strength of the Lord God, making mention of his righteousness, and his only. In obedience to his command, for the purpose of honouring him, preach his gospel; and, attended by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, you shall find, as did the Saviour, that harlots are not the last to go into the kingdom of heaven. That grace which brought her, who, Pharisees thought was past hope, to the feet of her Lord, and led her to bathe them with tears, will bring others there. And whatever you may say, Christ will say, her sins which were many are forgiven her.

2. We see in view of this subject, the vast importance of the Penitent Females' Refuge. As certainly as you preach the gospel to this class of sinners, it will lead some to repentance. Had the woman who came to Christ, really penitent, but not known to be so by men, and needing an opportunity to show it by her works, been destitute, and found no place to go to, for shelter, or even for a morsel of bread—had every house except houses of infamy been shut against her, her case would have been distressing. And had any one, from love to Christ, opened to her a place of Refuge, where she might have found respectable employment, and obtained a comfortable living, no doubt he would have said, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these, ye did it unto me.

A female among those who are abandoned, one who is young, and has, in childhood, had religious instruction, by the preaching of the gospel, by the conversation of a friend, or by some alarming providence, is convinced of her sins, that her way leads to hell, and that if she continues it, she will shortly be there, and she earnestly desires to reform. But attempts at reformation where she now is, and with her present companions are fruitless. She wishes therefore to escape, and go, where she can find friends, and a home. But where shall she go? To her parents. She has none. A Mother she once had, a lonely widow, but the conduct of her daughter broke her heart; and brought her to an untimely grave sorrowing. Now she has no parents. Shall she go to her relations? they will not receive her. Shall she find respectable employment? no respectable person will employ her. What then shall she do? I will tell you what she has done. She has wandered, and wandered, but finding no place of refuge, has in despair, cast herself into the sea, and gone through a watery grave to perdition. Another in a similar case, has taken the fatal poison, and sunk palsied in death. But more, vastly more, after looking in vain for relief, have drowned their anguish, by intoxication, and rushed headlong in iniquity, to the world of woe.

Had some moral Howard met these persons when convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and told that faithful saying which is worthy of all acceptation; or had some Elizabeth Frye, in accents of kindness, invited them to a house of Refuge, most gladly would they have gone there. It would have been to them as life from the dead. In regular employment, under the influence of the gospel, and of the Holy Spirit, they might have found it to them, the house of God, and the gate of heaven.

By the labours of one Society from 1807, to 1824, seven hundred females, a vast portion of whom were under twenty years of age, were saved from a life of infamy, and restored to respectable, and useful stations in society, through the medium of a House of Refuge. More than forty of them had, in 1824, become heads of families. Not a few of them had hopefully passed from death unto life; and according to the testimony of some of the wisest, and most benevolent men in Christendom, were walking in the commandments, and ordinances of the Lord, blameless. Seven of them were in 1809 members of one church, and so far as appears, were adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour, by lives of consecration to his service.

Numbers of them have died, and in possession of that peace which passeth all understanding; acknowledging, in tears of gratitude, with their dying breath, their everlasting obligations, under God, to the members of that Society. So decisive was the voice of Providence in favour of this institution, and so manifest, and extensive its utility, that, in eight years after its establishment, it numbered more than seventeen hundred annual subscribers, of more than one pound sterling each. More than seventy times, have its interests been publicly advocated from the pulpit; and the contributions on those occasions, have amounted to more than three thousand pounds sterling. And if the names of Wilberforce, Teignmouth, Babington, Grant, and a host of others like them, will secure support to a benevolent object, this Society

will have it. The legacies which it has received, in addition to its annual subscriptions, and contributions, have amounted to more than eight thousand pounds sterling.

Not less encouraging, in proportion to the means used, have been the indications of Providence in favour of the Society in this city, which now asks for your support. Though in its infancy, and with small pecuniary resources, it has already been the means of restoring, from a life of infamy and ruin, about fifty individuals. They are now in respectable, and useful stations, with apparently as fair a prospect of being saved from eternal death, and obtaining everlasting glory, as persons generally, who have regular employment, and enjoy the stated means of grace. Some of them, there is reason to believe, have already chosen that good part, which shall not be taken from them; and are now rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.

One came to the Refuge who was led astray by the abominable villainy of one in this city, who called himself respectable, and was called so by others, at the tender age of fourteen; and after years of infamy, and wretchedness, too horrible to be told, she was awakened by the awful warnings, and dying agonies, of one of her wretched companions. She had a deep sense of guilt, and an ardent desire to reform. No sooner was this known, than she was confined, and cruelly treated by her associates, to make her return to her former course. But directed by a kind Providence, after many fruitless efforts, she escaped; and found one who had compassion on her, and kindly directed her to the House of Refuge. To that place she came, deeply distressed on account of her sins. But not able to read, and altogether unacquainted with divine things, all that she could say was, that she wanted to find God. And happy for her, she had come to a place where God dwells. She was received; and learnt to read the Bible. There she found God, and his Son Jesus Christ; and there is reason to hope, gained that knowledge of them which is life eternal. She walks, say those acquainted with her, in unaffected

humility, deeply lamenting her sins, has obtained a knowledge of useful business, is industrious in her habits, and delights exceedingly in reading the word of God.

Hundreds, and hundreds in the heart of this city, far famed for its deeds of benevolence, are now in the same wretched condition in which she was. Upon an average they cannot be expected to continue on a state of probation more than seven years, but in that time, unless rescued by the hand of kindness, to be in the world of woe.

Now they are on probation. Let the gospel be preached among them, and attended by the mighty power of Him, who delights to bless it, numbers will be convicted of sin. They will seek, most earnestly too, a place of refuge. And they will greatly need one.

This Society, as we trust, from love to Christ, wish to furnish them with what appears to be essential to their deliverance from hell; and preparation for heaven; a place of refuge—where they may be freed from temptation, instructed by discreet, and pious persons, of their own sex, in useful business; taught to read, and to write; enjoy the means which God has appointed for fitting them for usefulness on earth, and through grace, for the eternal joys of heaven. But this they cannot do, without pecuniary assistance.

Will you grant them this assistance. For the sake of honouring God, and saving souls, who but for your assistance, must shortly be in torment, weep and wail to everlasting ages, will you, to save them from eternal death, and raise them to thrones of celestial glory, furnish the needful pecuniary assistance. Does any one say, It will cost too much? You will not think so, when these heavens are passing away with a great noise; and the elements are melting with fervent heat, when the earth, and all that is in it, is burnt up. There was a time when to save temporal life, men must forsake all; when he that was on the house-top must not come down to take any thing out of his house, nor he that was in the field return back to take his clothes. But did they, as

they stood on the top of the mountain, and saw the smoke of their city go up as the smoke of a great furnace, think that they had given up too much?

And will you, should you be so unspeakably happy as to stand hereafter on the heavenly Zion, in view of a dissolving world, suppose you have owned it all, and for the glory of God in the salvation of souls, have given it all up; will you think that you have given up too much; as you look on that exceeding and eternal weight of glory, and begin to rise upward from glory to glory? No—a world will be nothing. Give it up then, for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls, as often, and as much as he requires; and God himself shall be your eternal portion.

Nor is this all. That mystery of iniquity, that sink of abomination, and depth of all moral defilement, *must* be done away. It will be done away before the rising light of that glory, which will spread from sea to sea. Not a vestige of its pollution, will remain on the earth. And the means by which this will be done, is the mighty power of the gospel, the glorious gospel of the blessed God. And what people on earth, have a better opportunity to exhibit an example of this mighty power, which shall be felt round the globe, than the Christians of this city.

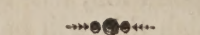
Placed by Jehovah on the spot where first blazed the flame that now electrifies Christendom; a flame which has burst the fetters of a continent, and will, one day, of a world; you may set an example of the might of that gospel which is the power of God to salvation, that shall not only tell on the Mississippi, and the Amazon; but echo on the Danube, and the Ganges; vibrate through every island of every sea, and be hailed by the ransomed of the Lord, of every nation, and kindred, people, and tongue, as they return and come home to Zion with songs of everlasting joy, and give the glory, with one heart, and one voice, all to God, forever.—AMEN.

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY.

Hon. SAMUEL HUBBARD, *President.*
JOHN TAPPAN, Esq. *Vice President.*
Rev. FRANCIS WAYLAND, Jr. *Corresponding Secretary.*
DAVID HALE, *Recording Secretary.*
WILLIAM ROPES, Esq. *Treasurer.*

Directors.

Rev. B. B. WISNER, *Chairman of the Board.*
Rev. WILLIAM JENKS, D. D
Mr. HORACE FOX,
" THOMAS VOSE,
" HENRY HOMES,
" EDMUND MONROE,
Rev. SOLOMON SIAS,
Mr. JONATHAN CARLETON,
" JOHN B. JONES,
CALEB H. SNOW, M. D.



OFFICERS OF THE LADIES' AUXILIARY.

Mrs. CATHARINE HAY, *President.*
Mrs. ANN McLEAN, *Vice President.*
Mrs. WILLIAM THURSTON, *Treasurer.*
Mrs. MARY O'BRIEN, *Secretary.*

Managers.

Mrs. ANN McLEAN,
Mrs. CATHARINE SCOLLAY,
Mrs. JONATHAN CARLETON,
Mrs. SERENO E. DWIGHT,
Mrs. WILLIAM MINOT,
Mrs. HEMAN LINCOLN,
Mrs. HENRY HILL,
Mrs. ANN JONES,
Mrs. P. C. MORRIS,
Mrs. MARY GORE,
Mrs. WILLIAM THURSTON,
Mrs. MARY O'BRIEN.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE DIRECTORS TO THE

Penitent Females' Refuge Society.

It is with devout and humble gratitude to Almighty God, that the Board of Directors of the Penitent Females' Refuge present to the Society their annual report of the progress of that institution, and of the success of their exertions. They are fully justified in stating that during no former period have their labours been attended with more evident tokens of the Divine favour, and that at no previous time has their object so successfully asserted its claims to the attention of the Christian and the Philanthrophist.

The Board beg leave to lay before the Society the following brief account of the changes which have taken place in the government and condition of the Refuge during the past year.

At the last annual meeting the Constitution was so amended, that the two Boards heretofore existing were condensed into one. This change has resulted in the most happy effects. The whole responsibility is now made to rest in one Board of Officers, all of whom, in their regular course of duty, become intimately acquainted with the state of the house. The Board of Directors meet monthly at the Refuge for the transaction of business. A Committee of two from their number is appointed at every meeting to visit the house weekly, to transact such business as may need immediate attention, to converse and pray with the inmates, and give such advice as may from time to time be found expedient. It is with pleasure they are enabled to state, that these duties have been, during the past year, punctually, and they hope profitably, discharged.

In the last annual report, the Society was apprised of the formation of a Ladies' Auxiliary Society, from the benefit of whose assistance the most sanguine expectations were entertained. Your Board are happy to state that these expectations have been fully realized. The Board of the Ladies Society has met every month throughout the year, to carry into effect the benevolent purposes for which we are associated, and your Board has received from them, from time to time, most important assistance. A Committee of two Ladies has also visited the house once a week, and sometimes oftener; and it is but just to say, that to their unremitting and christian exertions, the present prosperous condition of the house may be in a great measure attributed.

About the time of the last annual meeting, the former Superintendent relinquished his connexion with the Institution. The election of a successor was a subject of deep interest to the Board, and one with which the success of our efforts was most intimately connected. On

this question there was also a difference of sentiment in the Board itself. A part were of opinion that the house could not be successfully managed without the presence of a Gentleman, as Superintendent. Others, on the contrary, believed that the greater success might be expected from having it entirely under the controul of females. The subject was fully discussed, and at last, with great harmony, the latter opinion prevailed. To meet with a Lady of suitable qualifications, was then a task which seemed peculiarly difficult. But providentially this difficulty was very soon removed. Miss Mary Webb, a Lady who, from the first formation of the Society, had taken a deep interest in its success, was unanimously elected first Superintendent of the house; and we are happy to state that she accepted of the appointment. With every returning month, we have had increasing reason to believe, that our deliberations on this subject were guided by Omniscient Wisdom. The appearance of the house, the improvement of the inmates in neatness, attention, and industry, bear abundant testimony to the ability and success with which Miss Webb has conducted the arangements of the Institution.—Miss Wilder, who has with much self-denial and faithfulness, devoted herself to the service of the Institution, and Miss Gillpatrick, who was appointed as an Assistant Superintendant, at the commencement of the year, are the other Ladies to whom, with Miss Webb, the arangements of the house have been committed. The Board are happy to state, that both of them have merited the approbation and gratitude of your Board and the Society.

That the Society may be enabled to form as definite an idea as possible of the state of the house, the following brief account of its changes, during the past year, is presented.

The number of inmates at the beginning of the year 1825 was	16
There have been admitted during the year - - - - - - -	8
Total -	24
There have been placed at reputable service - - - -	3
Restored to their friends - - - - - - - -	2
Removed on account of sickness - - - - -	3
Eloped - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	3
Present number - - - - - - - - - - - -	13
Total -	24

The inmates have through the year been assiduously engaged in washing, ironing, spinning, knitting, and picking wool, besides attending to all the common branches of domestic employment. Since January 1, 1825, there has been charged for work done at the house $324, 81.

The moral condition of the inmates may be seen from the following extract of a report made by the first Superintendant to the Corresponding Secretary. "In relation to the moral state of the house, I believe it may be considered as correct as can be reasonably expected, considering the dispositions and former habits of the inmates. It is true, we sometimes meet with difficulties; but perhaps as few

occur as in almost any family of the same number, where no two were allied by the ties of natural affection. Of the present family, *four*, we charitably hope, have passed from death unto life. Of some others, there is reason to believe that, unless placed in the way of extraordinary temptation, they would conduct with propriety. Others have not been in the Institution for a sufficient length of time to test their sincerity."

The Society will perceive, by reference to the Treasurer's Report, that a considerable portion of the amount due for the purchase of the house, remains unliquidated. To meet this demand, and defray the current expenses of the establishment, we have no reliance, under God, but on the benevolence of the publick. The house that has been purchased, was obtained at a very low price. The Institution, we are convinced, is conducted with exemplary economy. The object is one which must recommend itself at once, to every man, and especially to every parent, who regards the salvation of the soul worth an effort; or even who wishes well to good order in society. To every such man, we make our appeal, and we confidently hope it will not be disregarded.

All which is respectfully submitted.

B. B. WISNER, *Chairman.*

RULES AND REGULATIONS

OF THE

PENITENT FEMALES' REFUGE,

CITY OF BOSTON.

OF THE SUPERINTENDENT.

It shall be the duty of the Superintendent to regulate and oversee all the arrangements of the house, to conduct the morning and evening devotions, to exercise a parental government over the persons committed to her charge, and by every suitable means instil into their minds the principles of industry, neatness and piety.

She will be expected to make a weekly report of the state of the house, and so far as it may be necessary, of the progress of each individual, to the committee of the month.

She will also be expected to keep an accurate account of the expenses of the house, of the articles received, the work accomplished, and in general will be considered the responsible head of the institution.

OF ADMISSION, &c.

An applicant may be received as a candidate for admission on a permit from one of the Directors, or of one of the ladies' committee, or by the Superintendent herself after the requisite examination.

Every female admitted to the house shall be considered, for the first two months, as on probation. If she conduct with propriety du-

ring that term, she will be admitted by the committee of the month, who alone have power to receive any person in full, as a beneficiary of this charity.

No person, will be admitted, whose health, in the opinion of the physician, is such as should exclude her from the privileges of this institution.

Every applicant shall, before her admission, disclose her real name, and give as minute an account of her former life as may be required by the Superintendent.

No person, after having been admitted, will be allowed to leave the premises unless by special permission of the Superintendent. And any one who elopes, will be considered as having forfeited all the privileges of the house.

Every inmate of the institution should be fully sensible that HER OWN BENEFIT is the grand object in view: it will therefore be expected that she submit to the order and regulations of the house, and promptly and faithfully obey the commands and attend to the instructions and labour prescribed by the Superintendents.

After having passed the probationary term, and being admitted to the privileges of the family, her own clothing, (if it be of sufficient value) shall be laid aside, with her name marked on it, to be reserved for her use whenever she shall be dismissed from the institution; which clothing shall be deposited in the wardrobe, under the care of the Superintendents. Suitable clothing shall be provided at the expense of the institution, which shall be kept in separate apartments in the wardrobe, a change of which shall be dealt to the inmates at the discretion of the Superintendents.

Persons thus admitted, will be expected to remain in the family until they shall have given satisfactory evidence that it will be safe to recommend them to reputable families; the Directors reserving to themselves the power, where the friends of an inmate (if respectable characters) are willing to receive and take care of her, to restore her to their charge and protection. And when any one, by repeated acts of disobedience and misconduct, shall have violated the laws of the house, and is likely to prove injurious to others, she shall be expelled by the Directors.

No profane or improper language may be used by the inmates; nor shall they be allowed to converse upon the scenes of their past lives; nor to speak harshly to each other, or reproach each other on account of former misconduct.

No person whatever shall converse with an inmate without permission from a Director or the Superintendent, and no person shall so converse but in presence of one of the Superintendents.

HOURS, EMPLOYMENT, &c.

Not less than seven, nor more than eight, hours shall be allowed for sleep.

Evening prayers will be attended at half past 8 o'clock in summer, and at 9 o'clock in winter.

The inmates will retire to rest at 9 o'clock in summer, and at 10 o'clock in the winter. All the lights in the rooms will be extinguished immediately after retiring, except in case of sickness.

Each inmate will, if possible, have a separate bed, and will be responsible for the perfect neatness of her room or part of a room.

Straw beds or mattresses will be used.

A book, or some token of approbation, shall occasionally be given by the committee to those who are reported by the Superintendent to have kept their rooms in the most perfect order, and who have obtained the praise of the greatest personal neatness, and most uniform good conduct.

Each inmate will be furnished with her own tooth-brush and comb.

The inmates will rise at the ringing of a bell at 5 o'clock in summer, and 6 o'clock in winter. The Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent will visit the rooms in half an hour after the ringing of the morning bell, to see that the occupants have risen, and that their rooms are in order. Half an hour will be allowed for retirement; and the bell for morning prayers will be rung one hour after that for rising.

Prayers, both at morning and evening, will be accompanied with reading the scriptures, and if practicable, with singing.

The day will be spent in such labour as the Superintendents shall direct. Two hours of each day, when circumstances permit, will be spent in school; a suitable time, at the discretion of the Superintendent, will be allowed for profitable reading.

A committee of ladies will be expected to visit weekly, for the purpose of examining the state of the house, ascertaining the conduct and improvement of the inmates, and affording such advice and encouragement as may be proper.

All kinds of distilled or fermented spirits are absolutely prohibited, unless when prescribed by the physician.

The use of tobacco and snuff is absolutely prohibited.

When any one shall have continued in the institution such a length of time, and conducted with so much propriety, as that the Directors and Superintendent shall think proper to procure a situation for her, she shall have a recommendation according to her merit, to the head of the family about to receive her.

Should any one, after having been placed in a family, return to the Refuge, she shall be under the same regulations as at first; and the Directors will take the same care to provide a place for her when they think it expedient.

As seclusion from the world is so absolutely necessary and important to reformation of morals and the retrieving of a lost character, any female who is truly desirous of realizing those advantages, must think herself happy in finding a home, where she will be screened from the public eye, kindly treated, fed, clothed, and instructed, in health, and, in sickness provided with nursing, physician and medicine, and with various other comforts, especially those of religious privileges and Christian friends who feel deeply interested in her welfare temporal and eternal, and who, after gaining proof of her integrity, will endeavour to reinstate her in society where she may obtain a respectable livelihood. Under such circumstances, she must feel it her duty to manifest her gratitude to the benefactors of the institution by her obedience, industry and faithfulness; and will also endeavour to excite the same feelings in the other inmates.

Boston Penitent Females' Refuge, in account with Jonathan Carleton, Treasurer.

			Dr.	
1824. *Dec.* 27,	To balance due on settlement made this day, . .		$ 382	86
1825. *Jan.* 26,	" Cash paid towards the amount due for the Estate,		300	
	" " bill of repairs on the Estate, ...		410	
Dec. 9,	" " towards the amount due for the Estate,		250	
	" " one year's interest on $5000, at 5 pr. ct.		250	
	" " for the support of the house, (sundry bills,) amount		934	55
" 27,	" balance in the hands of the Treasurer, ...		240	33
			$2,767	74

	Contra,	Cr.	
	By Cash received this year, (1825,) donations and subscriptions, to the amount of	$2,577	00
	" Contribution at the Park Street Church, . .	190	74
		$2,767	74

1825. *Dec.* 27, By balance now in the hands of the Treasurer, . . $240 33

Boston, Dec. 27, 1825. *Errors Excepted*,

JONATHAN CARLETON, *Treasurer.*

There are sundry bills audited, but not paid, to the amount of about $130.

The whole cost of the Estate, Dec. 9, 1824, was . . $7,500

Amount paid when purchased, ... 2,500

Balance due, ... $5,000

Which amount was hired of the Massachusetts Hospital Life Insurance Company, at 5 per cent per annum. Paid Dec. 9, 1825, on account of the principal, $250; and one year's interest, $250; leaving a balance due on the Estate, Dec. 9, 1825, of $4,750.

	The Superintendent's Account.	Dr.	
	To paid for sundry articles of clothing, &c. for the inmates of the house, ...	$235	93
	" labour done for E. Parsons & Co.	47	70
	" paid for provisions, &c. as per bills, ...	208	38
1825. *Dec.* 27,	" Cash on hand, ...	10	70
		$502	71

	Contra,	Cr.	
	By Cash received of the Ladies' Auxiliary Society, at sundry times, ...	$235	93
	" sundry articles of furniture received of E. Parsons & Co. per bill, ...	47	70
	" Cash received for work done in the house this present year, (1825,)	219	08
		$502	71

1825. *Dec.* 27, By Cash on hand, ... $ 10 70

Donations have also been received from a number of friends, consisting of various articles of household furniture, clothing, provisions, &c. &c., which have been appropriated to the benefit of the institution, agreeable to the wishes of the benevolent donors.

Received of Dr. W. B. White, a box of Medicine, valued at $10 50

Do. of Dr. Thayer, value 2 00